THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Percentage as on 31.3.88 is as under:

Urban 89.88%

Rural 10.12%

(c) and (d) All the villages in the rural areas in the country are likely to be provided with Telecom. facility by the year 2000 AD. As a first step, one public telephone will be provided in each of the inhabited hexagons (an area with 5 Km side) during the 8th plan. The facility will thereafter be expended gradually to all the villages upto the year 2000.

ED Employees

516. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) since when and for what purpose ED system was introduced in the country, whether Government have accepted the recommendations of Savoor Committee to abolish the ED system in urban areas and regularise the services of such ED employees else where, if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(b) how many ED officials are working in urban areas as on 31st December, 1988; and

(c) what is the number of officers/officials working in the Postal Directorate and how many of them are dealing with the problems of about three lakh ED employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) ED system which dated prior to 1866 has been introduced to cater to the limited postal traffic in various parts of the country where the justification for establishing a regular departmental post office does not exist. The recommendation of the Committee on ED system that no ED agent should be employed in urban areas has been accepted in general terms. However, in Press Sorting Offices the engagement of ED Sorters is to continue as the cost is to be recovered from press owners. It has also been proposed to countinue the category of ED Stamp Vendors, employment of ED Mailmen, ED Delivery Agents, ED Mail Carriers and ED Packers in sub-urban areas and small towns where there will be no justification for regular departmental employees of corresponding categories. The Committee on ED System has recommended continuance of ED system in the present form and has not recommended for making ED employees regular departmental employees.

(b) No separate statistics is maintained for the ED staff working in urban areas.

(c) The number of officers/officials working in Postal Directorate is 658. The problems of ED employees are dealt at various appropriate levels in the Department. In the postal Directorate, the problems of ED employees are dealt at various branches dealing with concerned subjects.

Regularisation of services of LD Employees

517. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have implemented the judgement of the Supreme Court to absorb casual workers (who have completed one year's service) in P&T Department, if so, whether the LD employees will continue to get first preference in the matter of absorption in Group 'D';

(b) whether the Department of Telecommunications has regularised the services of all the casual workers who have rendered seven years service in the Department; and

(c) whether Government would consi-